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* 249 the responsibility of holders to colonize and develop their areas. The grants were as a rule very large, consisting of leagues of land rather than of acres. Only one grant could be made to a family. As a result the son of a man who was a holder of a grant either had to remain on his father's land or had to leave the province and go elsewhere to acquire land.
• [425] The only remaining alternative was to forget about land and go into commerce or a profession. However, since the grants were so very large, the original holders were able to break them up, selling or renting parts, giving some to their married sons or daughters and yet retaining and cultivating enough to support themselves. Thus the original land grants were broken up, and several plantations were made of each.

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313 Engenho was the name given to the total plantation, as well as being the specific designation for the mill itself. Every plantation, regardless of whether it was inland or on the coast, needed two things: the soil known as massapê, and woods as close as possible to the mill to supply firewood for boiling the
[185] sugar-cane juice. Firewood soon became a crucial problem, one which has haunted the sugar industry for centuries. Conservation never was a Brazilian practice, and the tropical
[435] forests of the Recôncavo were soon stripped to feed the hungry mouths of the furnaces. As time went on it became necessary to import firewood by boat from wherever it could be
[386] found, which added greatly to the costs of producing sugar. The steam mill came much later and added further to the problem.

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361 At first the owner's house was a veritable fort, surrounded by bulwarks and stockades to resist Indian attacks, but by the end of the seventeenth century the need for this precaution had passed away and the plantation houses were assuming noble proportions. Many were imposing two-story buildings built of stone and mortar, the ground level generally being used as a storehouse and the master (senhor de engenho) and his family living on the upper floor. As a rule the Big House of the Recôncavo was situated so that there would be an excellent view from the windows, not only of the mill and slave quarters nearby but of the surrounding countryside. There was no sight so dear to the heart of a plantation master as that of fields of sugar cane, the leaves of many shades of green waving gently in the breese.

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[346] Frequently a chapel was connected with the house or built near it. Not very far away would be the mill, and nearby the

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the plantation complex became the principal characteristic. Marriages between the families of plantation owners brought new alignments of property, some families acquiring more land and others losing it through the natural processes of the marriage and growth of parts of families and the dying out of others. Family became increasingly important. As a rule the conjugal family was large and the extended family enormous; marriages between cousins, uncles, nieces, and other relatives were common. Social life was carried on between neighboring plantations, and of course many marriages took place as a result of these contacts, so that it was not infrequent to find many plantations, both contiguous and scattered, owned by the same family. As a rule each extended family had its traditional plantation as a sort of home base, and the head of the family frequently resided there, although not always. The patriarch was generally granted great respect and prestige by the members of his family, both far and near.

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Many who received land grants were the noblemen of the province, and many of them were representatives of the government. In this way the plantation master was securely establishing himself and his family not only in the Recôncavo but also in the governmental hierarchy, and was often in a position to see that the government action did not adversely affect the interests of the sugar-cane growers. At any rate, for several centuries social and political domination was in the hands of a small group which gradually intermarried, always strengthening itself. Its members were, first and foremost, the landowning gentry; next in importance were professional people such as lawyers, doctors, clerics, educators, and politicians. Members of this group were also soldiers, and in the War of Independence in 1822 the plantation masters of Vila Recôncavo took a foremost part both personally and financially, for which many were later honored by having royal titles bestowed upon them.

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As the small rural towns, and later the counties, grew, they also fell under the domination of one or several plantation masters. Not infrequently a feud would arise between two families to determine which was to be the dominant one. As the plantation master prospered, he showed his wealth and power with a degree of ostentation which was commented upon by travelers and chroniclers of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. The ruins of houses built at this time can be seen today scattered throughout the coastal northeast.

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178 located in a position where it could grind the cane of many
*249 plantations. The two aspects of the sugar industry, the agricultural and the industrial, were to be separated. The cane was to be planted, cultivated, and harvested by one group of people; these were the former plantation masters, who under the new system became simply suppliers of sugar cane (fornecedores de cana) to the mill. The cane was then milled,
[473] processed, and marketed by another group of people, a corporate body which became personified as the usineiro.

175 However, this division did not last long, for the modern up-
*249 to-date machinery of the new factories proved capable of
473 grinding more cane than the planters were supplying. Because
433 of their poor financial conditions and loss of laborers due to the abolition of slavery and the consequent resettlement of the former slaves, the planters were not able to expand their sugar-cane production enough to meet the demands of the factories. In other cases the planters resented the new factories and simply refused to cooperate, continuing to operate their outmoded mills in spite of adverse conditions. As a result, the corporations began buying plantations of their own, situated as near their mills as possible, in order to assure themselves of a larger supply of cane, and to lessen their dependence upon the individual planters.

175 There was an epoch when the hunger for land seemed insa-
*249 tiable. The usineiros not only had funds at their disposal which
• 425 could be used for the purchase of land, but also had the means
473 of forcing individual planters to sell their land to the corporation. By refusing to mill the cane of the planter, or by taking his cane and then letting it sour, and by various other methods, the usineiros were able to force many planters into bankruptcy, after which the corporation bought the land. Also, many planters who continued to depend upon their own efforts, producing sugar in their old-style mills, gradually went into bankruptcy, since they could not compete with the improved product of the new factories.

175 In effect the factory system in Vila Recôncavo is an enlarged
* 249 agricultural-industrial combination, an engenho enlarged many
473 times over. The ownership pattern has changed; whereas the engenho was owned by a family, and therefore subject to transfer on the death of the owner, the usina is a corporation, which continues despite the death of stockholders. As will be shown
[178] later, however, the corporation may even be a family. The plantation master, owner of lands and of slaves and ruler of

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tory and its fields, and who are slowly drifting away from visiting the factory nucleus.

An overall result of the new conditions between private planters and the factory is a desire on the part of the suppliers of São Pedro to become independent of this outlet. Several of the suppliers are shifting their cane to other neighboring factories, when this is convenient. Most of them are seriously [311] considering shifting to another crop, as will be described below; in fact a goodly proportion of land has already been taken out of sugar-cane production, thus diminishing future cane harvests and endangering the cane supply of Usina São Pedro.

What was formerly a peaceful, "all in the family," almost preservelike area has become an area of tensions and of poor business, and social, relations. The situation has all the possibilities of a traditional sugar-cane kind of land capture. The factory needs land in order to produce more cane so that the mill can operate at capacity. No one is willing to sell to the factory, nor even to supply as much cane as he might under other conditions. But the private planters are dependent upon [452] the factory, economically and for services. Therefore it is an easy matter for the factory to make difficulties for the individual planter, even gradually forcing him into failure, since the planter operates on credit and has little latitude for even [425] a single crop failure. Such a failure gives the factory an opportunity to acquire badly needed lands at a bargain.

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The sugar industry in the community of Vila Recôncavo has also undergone changes in the labor aspects, in line with the entire industry. As was pointed out in Chapter 4, the price of the sugar cane and the sugar is artificially regulated, and has been rising slowly over a period of years. However, nationwide social legislation in the past three years has raised the wages of the workers annually, before the price increases were granted by the Institute of Sugar and Alcohol. Spiraling inflation has also helped raise all the costs, of labor, of materials, and of machinery. Whereas prices for the task done have always been fairly well regulated, they have recently become a very strong issue, and there is much worker discontent. The planter, whether private or corporate, is more than ever interested in holding down the costs of his labor supply, since other costs, particularly of machinery and repairs, are soaring, always narrowing the margin between the total cost of production and the established selling price.

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242 can collect bananas, which should pay for the operating costs
[434] while waiting for the cacao to mature.

At the end of a five- or six-year period, the shade tree is usually large enough to provide sufficient shade, and the banana trees are gradually removed. At the same time the cacao begins to give its fruit, and one can then consider himself a cacauiculter.

178 Several planters in Vila Recôncavo are at the banana-manioc
245 planting stage, and have met with their first serious labor
461 problem. No one wants to work in banana and manioc fields,
464 as the work is arduous and slow. Machines are not available
[407] for the mechanical cultivation of manioc, so the work must be done by hand. The work is slowly being accomplished, but at costs which will make the manioc a considerable liability.

178 Nevertheless, in spite of these difficulties, there is con-
245 siderable interest in cacao in Vila Recôncavo, and cacao must
432 be considered as an element of change in the community which
*[24?] will have far-reaching effects. The area of sugar production will be considerably reduced, requiring adjustments on the part of the factories, which represent large financial investments. Furthermore, cacao is a fairly simple product to process--its conversion into chocolate is usually done after export --and so it is quite likely that each plantation will return to the older aspect of the plantation, both growing and processing the crop, and become once again a highly self-sufficient unit.
[571] This would of course bring about a new alignment of socio-economic relations and would undoubtedly alter the community structure.

178 A third principal cause of change in Vila Recôncavo is the
315 growth of a new and potent industry within the community and
433 throughout the county. This new industry is the nascent Brazilian petroleum industry. Exploratory work was done in Vila Recôncavo in 1950 and 1951 under the guidance of the Conselho Nacional de Petroleo. Since that date a nationalized company, Petrobrás, has been formed to exploit the oil fields which lie under the topsoil of the county of Vila Recôncavo. Petrobrás has brought in several hundred oil wells and has built roads, pipelines, storage tanks, and machine shops. Just outside the limits of the community, but within the county, it has built its oil refinery and has created a small new, modern city to
[425] house the technical workers of the refinery and the field. On land expropriated from the Usina São Pedro it has also con-

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structed a series of barracks, a recreation hall, a restaurant, and a service center for the unmarried field workers.

In spite of this, the changes in the community structure brought about by the petroleum industry have been as yet relatively few. The industry exists in the community as an intruder, not affecting communal life to any great extent, and not contributing any substantial local benefits. This is perhaps in part due to the fact that it is a nationalized company, with headquarters located in the city of Salvador, rather than a product of local efforts. The petroleum workers for the most part have not been drawn from the local labor force but have come from outside the county. It is almost as if a military base had been established in Vila Recôncavo on a temporary basis. [464]

The effect on the town has been principally to increase the number of houses. [362] The married workers of Petrobrás for the most part live in the town. [571] Naturally there has occurred a broadening of point of view among the town dwellers as a result of social intercourse, as well as a certain new prosperity due to greater numbers. [493] Nevertheless, there are still no private cars, buses, or public transportation in the county. [494] The petroleum workers and their families go to Salvador whenever possible for shopping and amusements, rather than attempting to satisfy these needs in Vila Recôncavo, where public services, diversions, and so forth have continued to be almost nonexistent. [484]

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To counterbalance the effect of prosperity brought to the town by increased population, the petroleum industry has had an adverse effect on the fishing activities of the townspeople. Many wells have been drilled in the shallow waters of the Bay of All Saints in front of the town. As a result of underwater explosions, the constant passage of rapid motor launches, and digging and dredging machines, the traditional fishing area of the town's fishermen has been rapidly depleted and its ecological balance destroyed. The fishermen are gradually turning away from fishing as an occupation and seeking other remunerative activity, either outside the community or in the petroleum industry and, to a slight extent, in the sugar industry. Others are turning to service occupations, such as bricklaying, as stopgap activities.

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Petrobrás to date has affected rural life very little. The planters of the area have profited to some extent because of the roads constructed by the company. It is now possible to

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567 those under 12 years of age.[1] Of the 121 slaves listed in the particular inventory mentioned above, 40 were African. Most of these came from West Africa. Of those whose African origin is indicated, *Nago* (Yoruba) is most often listed, and *Gege* (Ewe) is second.

249 On these sugar plantations of the Recôncavo in the colonial period,
565 the overseer of all operations involved in the growth of sugar cane
463 and production of sugar was the owner himself. Generally, only the oldest son was trained to take over his duties on the plantation; the younger sons were sent to Salvador, to Recife, or even to Europe to be educated as lawyers, physicians, engineers or Catholic priests.
[582] Daughters were married early and given their dowry, or they were sent to convents to become nuns or live as lay sisters. Marriages with first cousins were frequent. Every effort was made to keep the plantation undivided and in the family. The Recôncavo sugar plantation, until about the middle of the nineteenth century, was a remarkably stable community changing little in size and organization from generation to generation.

249 After the abolition of slavery, there was a partial exodus of ex-
567 slaves from the plantations to nearby towns and to the capital of Bahia. The ex-slaves who moved to small towns became manual
463 labourers or fishermen, or engaged in the profession they had learned
464 on the plantations, such as barbering, bricklaying, etc. In other cases, ex-slaves rented small plots of land on neighbouring plantations
[427] to raise manioc, corn, tobacco and other crops which required little outlay of capital. Others became sugar planters on a small scale; known as *rendeiros*, they rented a few acres from a plantation and cultivated sugar cane, sending the product to the nearby *engenhos* for milling. In other cases, the ex-slaves simply moved from one plantation to another, or they often remained as free men on the same plantation, still engaged in raising sugar cane, living under the same
249 conditions as before, but legally free. Contrary to popular opinion,
433 the *engenhos* of the Recôncavo did not all cease operations after
567 abolition. Many of them kept on producing as before. In other cases the *engenho* or mill closed down while the plantation continued to plant sugar cane, sending it to a nearby *engenho* which was still functioning for milling. Some *engenhos*, however, did close down altogether and were abandoned, or went into the hands of receivers.

249 At this time many plantations changed owners—wealthy people in
471 the city were able to buy lands at a low cost and did so. But the
567 failure of many of the *engenhos* in the Recôncavo was not a direct result of abolition, it was rather the continuation of an economic
[425] trend which had been going on for a long time. For many years previous to abolition, the plantations of the Recôncavo had suffered from lack of capital, poor administration, occasional crop failure, and

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[1] In the hinterlands, *pardo* indicated light skin; *caboclo*, dark skin; and *crioulo*, black. These same terms nowadays are used differently in the Recôncavo. See page 30 ff.

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take his master's name.[47] Slaves who desired to change masters had the right to request transfer, and the master was expected to acquiesce.[48] Intercession in behalf of a fugitive slave, or even of one about to be punished for some other offense, is said seldom to have been in vain.[49] The master guilty of inhuman treatment toward his slave was liable to the police or tribunals.[50] Some masters preferred to have He could

[47] Ribeiro, *op. cit.*, p. 256; cf. also Freyre, *op. cit.*, p. 327: "Hence, the many Cavalcantis, Albuquerques, Mellos, Mouras, Wanderleys, Lins, Carneiro Leãos, etc., who possess none of the illustrious blood which their names imply."

[48] Ribeiro, *op. cit.*, p. 256. Koster (*op. cit.*, I, 194) records that "for this purpose a note is given, declaring that the bearer has leave to enter into the service of any one, upon the price which the master demands being paid by the purchaser. With this the slave applies to any individual or property whom he may wish to serve; owing to having heard a good report of his character toward his slaves, or from any other cause. This is a frequent practice." The following interesting case was observed: "A Negro woman applied to a planter to be purchased; for which purpose she had brought a note from her master. She was accepted; and a bargain was concluded between the two persons. However, the day after she had taken up her abode upon the estate of her new master, she came to him, and falling down upon her knees, said that she had a fellow-slave who wished likewise to serve him; and she begged him to purchase her companion. The new master spoke to the owner of the slave in question of the subject; but he refused to sell him, and the matter rested in this manner. But on the third day, he received a visit from the owner, offering the slave for sale, adding, that the man had refused to work, and had threatened to hang himself; and as he was a Gabão Negro (noted for the resolute manner which, on occasion, they committed suicide), he much feared that he might put his threat into execution. The price was soon fixed, and on the following morning the man made his appearance. He proved to be a most excellent slave" (*ibid.*, p. 203 n.).

[49] Codman, *op. cit.*, p. 201. Cf. also: "Costumes belissimos instituem-se entre os senhores; como o de *apadrinhar* os remissos ou fugitivos, o que impede o castigo, e nunhum senhor viola" (Ribeiro, *op. cit.*, p. 255).

[50] J. B. von Spix and C. F. von Martius, *Travels in Brasil, 1817–1820*, trans. H. E. Lloyd (2 vols.; London, 1824), I, 179.